UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/CN.6/1995/L.17/Add.5
29 March 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
Thirty-ninth session
New York, 15 March-4 April 1995
Agenda item 3 (e)

PREPARATIONS FOR THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN; ACTION FOR EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE: DRAFT PLATFORM FOR ACTION

Draft Platform for Action

Addendum

Chapter IV

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

B. Unequal access to and inadequate educational opportunities

56. Education is a basic human right and an essential tool for achieving the goals of full equality, development and peace and for the full realization of women's potential. Non-discriminatory education benefits both girls and boys, and thus ultimately contributes to more equal relationships between women and men. Equality of access and attainment of educational qualifications is necessary if more women are to become agents of change. Literacy of women is an important key to improve health, nutrition and education in the family, and to empower women to participate in decision-making in society. Investing in formal and non-formal education and training for girls and women, with its exceptionally high social and economic return, has proved to be one of the best means of achieving [sustained economic growth and] [sustainable development] [centred on the human person] and for eradicating poverty.

57. On a regional level, girls and boys have achieved equal access to primary education, except in some parts of Africa, in particular sub-Saharan Africa, and Central Asia, where access to education facilities is still inadequate. Progress has been made in secondary education, where equal access of girls and boys has been achieved in some countries. Enrolment of girls and women in

9508991

tertiary education has increased considerably. In many countries, private schools have also played an important complementary role in improving access to education at all levels. Yet, more than five years after the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990) adopted the World Declaration on Education for All and the Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs, approximately 100 million children, including at least 60 million girls, are without access to primary schooling, and more than two thirds of the world's 960 million illiterate adults are women. The high rate of illiteracy prevailing in most developing countries, in particular in sub-Saharan Africa and some Arab States, remains a severe impediment to the advancement of women, and to development.

58. Discrimination in girls' access to education persists in many areas, owing to customary attitudes, [early marriages] and pregnancies, inadequate and gender-biased teaching and educational materials [, sexual harassment], and lack of adequate and physically and otherwise accessible schooling facilities. Girls undertake heavy domestic work at a very early age. Girls and young women are expected to manage both educational and domestic responsibilities, often resulting in poor scholastic performance and early drop-out from the educational system. This has long-lasting consequences for all aspects of women's lives.

58 bis. [Creation of a healthy educational and social environment in which all human beings, men and women, boys and girls, are consistently encouraged to foster moral and spiritual values would be extremely effective in the elimination of causes of discrimination against women and inequalities between men and women.]

58 ter. Women should be enabled to benefit from an ongoing acquisition of knowledge and skills beyond those acquired during youth. This concept of lifelong learning includes knowledge and skills gained in formal education and training, as well as learning that occurs in informal ways, including volunteer activity, unremunerated work and traditional knowledge.

59. Curricula and teaching materials remain gender-biased to a large degree, and are rarely sensitive to the specific needs of girls and women. This reinforces traditional female and male roles which deny women opportunities for full and equal partnership in society. Lack of gender awareness by educators at all levels strengthens existing inequities between males and females by reinforcing discriminatory tendencies and undermines girls' self-esteem. [The lack of sexual and reproductive education has a profound impact on women and men] [taking into account the rights, duties and responsibilities of parents and other persons legally responsible for children and consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child].

60. Science curricula in particular are gender-biased. Science textbooks do not relate to women's and girls' daily experience and fail to give recognition to women scientists. Girls are often deprived of basic math and science education and technical training, which provide knowledge they could apply to improve their daily lives and enhance their employment opportunities. Advanced study in science and technology prepares women to take an active role in the

technological and industrial development of their countries, thus necessitating a diverse approach to vocational and technical training. Technology is rapidly changing the world and has also affected the developing countries. It is essential that women not only benefit from technology, but also participate in the process from the design to the application, monitoring and evaluation stages.

60 bis. [It can be ascertained that, particularly in the developed countries, a substantial improvement in the situation of girls at all levels of education, including the higher level, is one of the factors of their continued progress in professional activities. Nevertheless, it can be noted that girls are still concentrated in a [too] limited number of [the higher] branches.] Even at a higher level of educational qualification, women encounter more prejudices than men in a number of sectors, which makes it difficult for them to maximize the use of their degrees.

61. The mass media are a powerful means of education. As an educational tool the mass media can be an instrument for educators and governmental and non-governmental institutions for advancement of women and for development. Computerized education and information systems are increasingly becoming an important element in learning and dissemination of knowledge. Television especially has the greatest impact on young people and, as such, has the ability to shape values, attitudes and perceptions of women and girls in both positive and negative ways. It is therefore essential that educators teach critical judgement and analytical skills.

62. Resources allocated to education in many countries are insufficient and in cases of structural adjustment programmes are sometimes further diminished. This has a long-term adverse effect on human development, particularly on that of women.

62 bis. In addressing unequal access to and inadequate educational opportunities, Governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes, so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects for women and men respectively.

Strategic objective B.1. Ensure equal access to education

Actions to be taken

63. By Governments:

New (a) Attain the goals of equal access to education without distinction as to sex, race, national origin, age or disability, or any other form of discrimination, and ensure that procedures to address grievances are established;

(a) By the year 2000, universal access to basic education and completion of primary education by at least 80 per cent of primary school-age children; closing the gender gap in primary and secondary school

education by the year 2005; universal primary education in all countries before the year 2015;

(b) Eliminate gender disparities in access to all areas of tertiary education, by ensuring that women have equal access to career development, training, scholarship and fellowship, and by adopting positive action when appropriate;

(c) Create a gender-sensitive educational system in order to ensure equal educational and training opportunities and full and equal participation of women in educational administration and policy- and decision making;

(c) bis. Provide, in collaboration with parents, non-governmental organizations, including youth organizations, communities and the private sector, young women with academic and technical training, career planning, leadership and social skills, and work experience to prepare them to participate fully in society;

(d) Increase enrolment and retention rates of girls by allocating appropriate budgetary resources, by enlisting the support of parents and the community, as well as through campaigns, flexible school schedules, incentives, scholarships and other means to minimize the costs of girls' education to their families [and to facilitate parents' ability to choose quality education for the girl child];

[by ensuring that the rights of women and girls to freedom of conscience and religion are respected in educational institutions] [through repealing any discriminatory laws or legislation based on religion, race or culture,]

(d) bis. Promote an educational setting that eliminates all barriers that impede the schooling of pregnant adolescents and young mothers, including, as appropriate, affordable and physically accessible child-care facilities and parental education to encourage those who have responsibilities for the care of their children and siblings during their school years, to return to, or continue with and complete schooling;

(d) ter. [Improve the equality of education to ensure that women of all ages are provided with useful knowledge, reasoning ability, skills and ethical values required to develop their full capacities in health and dignity and to participate fully in the social, economic and political process of development. In this regard, women and girls should be considered a priority group;]

(e) Make available non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive professional school counselling and career education programmes to encourage girls to pursue academic and technical curricula in order to widen their future career opportunities.

(e) bis. Encourage ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights where they have not already done so.

Strategic objective B.2. Eradicate illiteracy among women world wide [by the year 2000]

Actions to be taken

64. By Governments, national, regional and international bodies, bilateral and multilateral donors and non-governmental organizations:

(a) Reduce the female illiteracy rate to at least half its 1990 level, with emphasis on rural women, migrant, refugee and internally displaced women and women with disabilities;

(a) bis. Provide universal access to, and seek to ensure gender equality in completion of, primary education for girls by the year 2000;

(b) Eliminate the gender gap in basic and functional literacy as recommended in the World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien);

(b) bis. Narrow the disparities between developed and developing countries.

(b) ter. Encourage adult and family engagement in learning to promote total literacy for all people.

(b) quater. Expand the definition of literacy to include scientific and technological knowledge.

Strategic objective B.3. Improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology and continuing education

Actions to be taken

65. By Governments, in cooperation with employers, workers and trade unions, international and non-governmental organizations, including women's and youth organizations, and educational institutions:

(a) Develop and implement education, training and retraining policies for women, especially young women and women re-entering the labour market, to provide skills to meet the needs of a changing socio-economic context for improving their employment opportunities;

(a) bis. Provide recognition to non-formal educational opportunities for girls and women in the educational system;

(a) ter. Provide information to women and girls on the availability and benefits of vocational training, training programmes in science and technology, and programmes of continuing education;

(a) quater. Design educational and training programmes for women who are

unemployed in order to provide them with new knowledge and skills that will enhance and broaden their employment opportunities, including self-employment, and development of their entrepreneurial skills;

(b) Diversify vocational and technical training and improve access and retention of girls and women in education and vocational training such as science, mathematics, engineering, environmental sciences and technology, information technology and high technology, as well as management training;

(b) bis. Promote women's central role in food and agricultural research, extension and education programmes;

(c) Encourage the adaptation of curricula and teaching materials, encourage a supportive training environment and take positive measures to promote training for the full range of occupational choices of non-traditional careers for women and men, including the development of multidisciplinary courses for science and mathematics teachers to sensitize them to the relevance of science and technology in women's lives;

(c) bis. Also develop curricula and teaching materials, and formulate and take positive measures to ensure better access to and participation of women in science, technical and scientific areas, especially in areas where they are not represented or are underrepresented;

(c) ter. Develop policies and programmes to encourage women to participate in all apprenticeship programmes;

(d) Increase technical, managerial, agricultural extension training and marketing training opportunities for women in agriculture, fisheries, industry and business, arts and crafts, to increase income-generating opportunities, women's participation in economic decision-making, in particular through women's organizations at the grass-roots level, and their contribution to production, marketing, business, science and technology.

(d) bis. Ensure access to [quality] education and training at all proper levels for adult women with little or no education, for women with disabilities and for documented migrant, refugee and displaced women to improve their work opportunities.

Strategic objective B.4. Develop non-discriminatory education and training

Actions to be taken

66. By Governments, educational authorities and other educational and academic institutions:

(a) Elaborate recommendations and develop curricula, textbooks and teaching aids free of gender-stereotypes for all levels of education, including teacher training, in association with all concerned: publishers, teachers, public authorities and parents associations;

(b) [Develop training programmes and materials for teachers and educators that raise awareness about the status, role and contribution of women and men in the family and society; in this context, promote equality, [equity], cooperation, mutual respect and shared responsibilities between girls and boys [at an appropriate age consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and recognizing the rights, duties and responsibilities of parents and other persons legally responsible for children] [from pre-school level onward] [and develop, in particular, educational modules to ensure that boys have the skills necessary to take care of their own domestic needs and to share responsibility for their household and for the care of dependants]];

(b) bis. Develop training programmes and materials for teachers and educators raising awareness about their own role in the educational process with a view to providing them with effective strategies for gender-sensitive teaching;

(b) ter. In view of the importance of having female teachers at all levels and in order to attain and retain girls in schools, take actions to ensure that female teachers and professors have equal possibilities and equal status with male teachers and professors;

(b) quater. Introduce and promote training in peaceful conflict resolution;

(c) Take positive measures to increase in greater proportion access of women in educational policy- and decision-making, particularly by women teachers, at all levels of education and in academic disciplines, which are traditionally male-dominated, such as the scientific and technological fields;

(d) Support and develop gender studies and research at all levels of education, especially at the post-graduate level of academic institutions and apply them in the development of curricula, including university curricula, textbooks and teaching aids and in teacher training;

(d) bis. Develop leadership training and opportunities for all women to encourage them to take leadership roles both as students and as adults in civil society;

(e) Develop appropriate education and information programmes with due respect to multilingualism, particularly in conjunction with the mass media, that make the public, particularly parents, aware of the importance of non-discriminatory education for children, and the equal sharing of family responsibilities between girls and boys;

(e) bis. Develop human rights education programmes that incorporate the gender dimension at all levels of education, in particular by encouraging the inclusion in the curricula of higher institutions, especially in graduate and post-graduate juridical, social and political science studies, the study of the human rights of women as they appear in United Nations conventions;

(e) ter. Remove legal and regulatory barriers to [sexual and reproductive health] education within formal education [regarding women's health issues];

(e) quater. [Encourage, with the support of their parents and in cooperation with educational staff and institutions, the elaboration of educational programmes for girls and boys and the creation of integrated services related to youth sexuality, to raise awareness of their responsibilities and to help them to assume those responsibilities, taking into account the importance of such education and services to personal development and self-esteem, as well as the urgent need to avoid unwanted pregnancy, the spreading of sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS, and phenomena such as sexual violence and abuse];

(e) 5. Provide accessible recreational and sports facilities and establish and strengthen gender-sensitive programmes for girls and women of all ages in education and community institutions and support the advancement of women in all areas of sport and physical activity, including coaching, training and administration, and as participants at national, regional and international levels;

(e) 6. [Recognize and support the right of indigenous women and girls to education in a manner that is responsive to their needs, aspirations and cultures, including by efforts to develop appropriate educational programmes, curricula and teaching aids in the languages of indigenous peoples;]

New (f) [Establish pluricultural and plurilingual educational systems in countries with indigenous [people], in particular with the participation of women, and provide financial resources and infrastructure for their development;]

New (g) [Ensure that gender, cultural and religious diversity are respected in educational institutions and reflected in educational materials;]

New (h) Promote education, training and relevant information programmes for rural and farming women through the use of affordable and appropriate technologies, mass media, e.g., radio programmes, cassettes and mobile units;

New (i) Provide non-formal education, especially for rural women, in order to realize their potential with regard to health, micro-enterprise, agriculture and legal rights;

New (j) [Remove all barriers to schooling of pregnant girls and young mothers and provide child care and other support services].

Strategic objective B.5. Allocate sufficient resources for educational reforms and monitor implementation

Actions to be taken

EU proposes to consider B.5 under sections V and VI.

67. By Governments:

(a) Provide the required budgetary resources to the educational sector, with reallocation within the educational sector to ensure increased funds for basic education, as appropriate;

(b) Establish a mechanism at appropriate levels to monitor the implementation of educational reforms and measures in relevant ministries, and establish technical assistance programmes, as appropriate, to address issues raised by the monitoring efforts.

[68. [By Governments,] [Invite] private and public institutions, foundations, research institutes and non-governmental organizations:

[[to] mobilize additional funds [from organizations in the private sector] [, whenever necessary,] [to meet] [to assist in meeting] the costs of education [for all girls and women with a particular emphasis on under-served populations].]

bis Provide funding for special programmes, such as programmes in mathematics, science and computer technology, to advance opportunities for all girls and women.

69. By multilateral development institutions, including the World Bank, regional development banks, bilateral donors and foundations [, consider]:

(a) Increase[ing] funding for the education and training needs of girls and women as a priority in development assistance programmes;

(b) Maintain[ing] or increase[ing] funding levels for education in structural adjustment and economic recovery programmes, including lending and stabilization programmes.

70. By international and intergovernmental organizations, especially the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), at the global level:

[Monitor progress, using educational indicators generated by national, regional and international bodies, and make Governments accountable for implementing measures to close the gap between women and men in education and training opportunities, and in the levels of achievement in all fields, particularly primary and literacy programmes];

bis Provide technical assistance upon request to developing countries to strengthen the capacity to monitor progress in closing the gap between women and men in education, training and research, and in levels of achievement in all fields, particularly basic education and elimination of illiteracy;

New (b) Conduct an international campaign promoting the right of women and girls to education;

New (c) [Allocate a minimum percentage of assistance to basic education for women and girls].

Strategic objective B.5 bis [To promote lifelong learning [educational processes] for girls and women]

Actions to be taken

70 bis. By Governments, educational institutions and communities:

(a) Ensure the availability of a broad range of educational and training programmes that lead to ongoing acquisition by women and girls of the knowledge and skills required for living in, contributing to and benefiting from, their communities and nations;

(b) Provide support for child care and other services to enable mothers to continue their schooling;

(c) Create flexible education, training and retraining programmes for lifelong learning that facilitate transitions between women's activities at all stages of their lives.